

**Marine Safety Office (MSO) Puget Sound Y2K Business Continuity Contingency Plan
Exercise
Conducted 8 through 9 September 1999**

Executive Summary

The Marine Safety Office (MSO) Puget Sound exercised Annex C of the unit's Business Continuity and Contingency Plan (BCCP) for a 24 hour period from September 8 through September 9, 1999. The purpose of the exercise was to test unit recall using a pre-defined telephone tree and communicating with landline, cell phone, pager, and satellite telephones.

During the exercise, the MSO duty watch station was augmented by an additional command duty officer (CDO), watchstander, and two Y2K tiger teams, equipped and empowered to respond in the event of a communications failure. Each tiger team consisted of a team leader and two team members. Team make-up included members with Pollution Investigation, On-Scene Coordinator Representative, Marine Inspector, and Investigating Officer qualifications. Each team was equipped with a government vehicle with installed VHF-FM radio, two hand-held VHF-FM radios, cellular phones, pagers, personal protective equipment (PPE), appropriate forms/manuals for primary contingencies, and a satellite telephone. Teams were strategically located to minimize the potential for entering central business districts of Seattle and Tacoma. In addition, team member residences were in close proximity to each other in the event of activation to an actual response.

The exercise was a success and allowed MSO Puget Sound to identify numerous lessons learned. The MSO will ensure that these lessons learned and recommendations for improved communication systems are incorporated into the design of the new combined MSO, Vessel Traffic System (VTS), and Group watch operations center.

Background

MSO Puget Sound has developed a BCCP to identify specific contingency plans and procedures that can be implemented in the event of Y2K related failures and other emergencies. The plan contains strategies to mitigate risks and documents procedures and assignments to enable emergency response while continuing normal operations. A key component of the plan involves the identification of appropriate communications equipment and the testing of that equipment to ensure that it provides the necessary capability in each possible emergency scenario. MSO Puget Sound will utilize pagers, cell phones, VHF-FM radios, and satellite phones as backup to their primary telephone service.

Step 1 – Establish Major Objectives

The major objective for the exercise was to test the ability of the unit to maintain command, control, and communications throughout Y2K critical dates.

Step 2 – Identify Exercise Participants

Participants are listed in the table below. The exercise involved all 73 MSO unit personnel. There were no vessels or commercial port stakeholders involved in the exercise.

Participant Type	Participant
United States Coast Guard	
	Marine Safety Office, Puget Sound

Table 1 – Puget Sound Exercise Participants

Step 3 – Develop Exercise Scenario(s)

The MSO Puget Sound exercise consisted of the following scenario:

- ***Unit Recall/Communications Drill*** – This scenario involved the use of a telephone tree and communications equipment to test the ability of MSO unit personnel to contact each other during a Y2K critical date.

Step 4 – Conduct Exercise Activities

This section presents the primary MSO Puget Sound exercise activities.

- ***Unit Recall/Communications Drill***
 - Tiger teams were established and deployed with communications equipment.
 - Each team leader established positive communications with their team via cellular phone and pagers, and contacted the unit watch via satellite phone at given intervals.
 - The MSO telephone tree was used to notify all unit personnel of the drill. The CDO and watchstander contacted the Commanding Officer (CO), Executive Officer (XO), and Division Chiefs.
 - Division Chiefs then contacted their respective staff via phone and pager following the chain of command. To ensure that all contacts were made, each division reported back with personnel status and satisfactory communications test of pagers and cell phones.
 - Contacts were completed in one hour and forty minutes.

Step 5 – Conduct Post Exercise Analysis

The results of the post exercise analysis are provided in the table below.

No.	Observation/Explanation	Lesson Learned	Recommended Action
1	Communication systems and procedures were effective and executed as planned. However, before the exercise, pagers had to be recalled and redistributed to ensure all key players had a pager.	In the event of an emergency or a Y2K related event, all personnel at the unit must be available for recall. In order to meet this requirement and balance communications equipment between personnel responding to routine operations and personnel responding to contingency operations, more pagers must be procured. In the event cell phones and landlines are down, 2 way alphanumeric pagers issued to key decision making personnel may be an effective alternate means of communications.	MSO Puget Sound will continue to identify and request D13 funding to procure additional pagers.
2	Cellular phone communications were effective. However, in order to supply personnel involved in the exercise and normal operational personnel with a cell phone, antiquated cellular phones were utilized.	The cellular phones were effective for a short duration. However, their batteries were not capable of maintaining a charge. Over a long period (beyond 24 hours) this system would fail. In the event of an emergency or a Y2K related event, all personnel must have cellular phone capability. In order to meet this requirement, for personnel responding to routine operations and personnel responding to contingency operations, more cell phones, chargers, and batteries must be procured.	MSO Puget Sound will continue to identify and request D13 funding for additional cell phones, chargers, and batteries.
3	Satellite telephone communications with team leaders was effective.	Currently, communication by satellite phone is possible with the Washington Department of Emergency Management. If landline phone service is unavailable due to a Y2K event or natural disaster, satellite phones can be utilized.	MSO Puget Sound is upgrading software in order to initiate talk groups with other satellite phone users including field personnel, the Vessel Traffic System Puget Sound, and the District Thirteen Command Center. The MSO will continue to promote its incorporation into the Washington Department of Emergency Management talk group.

No.	Observation/Explanation	Lesson Learned	Recommended Action
4	During the exercise, one of the Washington State ferries had a collision with a ferry landing.	If this event had occurred when telephone lines were down and cellular telephone services were saturated, the MSO's ability to effectively coordinate the response with the Washington State Ferry system and local authorities would have been impaired. However, if the unit were able to utilize 800 megahertz (MHz) trunked radio service, response coordination would be greatly improved when landline telephone and cellular telephones were inoperable. This system would also improve routine response with the Washington State Ferry system, Washington Department of Emergency Management, local police and fire departments.	MSO Puget Sound will continue to work with D13 to obtain 800 MHz service.
5	Additional watch teams are required to maintain live 24 hour watch for a minimum of the 48 hour critical period identified for the millennium change.	MSO Puget Sound must continue to identify watchstander and tiger team requirements in addition to balancing routine operations. Surge operations beyond the 48 hour critical period must be addressed. Berthing accommodations are available, but not used due to need for CDO and watchstander to be near communication systems.	MSO Puget Sound will continue to investigate location and adequacy of berthing for MSO watch personnel.
6	MSO has a myriad of systems to communicate with VTS including an intercom system and very close proximity.	MSO's ability to maintain communications with the D13 Command Center given a telephone failure are limited to VHF radio, although satellite phones will soon be available. Currently, the only method of communications with Group is via VHF radio and runners to their Command Center three floors below the MSO. In an emergency situation, VHF communications would not be the appropriate means for communications between these units.	MSO Puget Sound will continue to improve communications operability with these units.

Table 2 – Puget Sound Exercise Results

For More Information***Contact the USCG Representatives***

No Point of Contact (POC) was identified for this exercise.

Or, Visit the Web Sites

Marine Safety Office: <http://www.uscg.mil/d13/units/msopuget/index.html>